

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

December 18, 2001

Upon Recess of BMA

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll. There were thirteen Aldermen present.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Levasseur, Sysyn, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, Vaillancourt, Pariseau, Cashin, Thibault, Hirschmann

Messrs.: Deputy City Solicitor Arnold, Louis Craig, Welfare Commissioner-Elect Paul Martineau

Mayor Baines stated as many of you know, Louis is retiring from his position as Executive Director of New Horizons and I learned about it after that great breakfast and the next day I was at West High School and was very proud to present him a Key to the City and on behalf of the citizens, I want to thank you for the extraordinary job at New Horizons.

Mayor Baines addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Communication from Louis Craig, Executive Director of New Horizons, requesting \$26,000.00 from Contingency to cover the Emergency Overnight Shelter Program

Mayor Baines stated why don't you explain your communication.

Mr. Craig stated I would like to take this occasion to congratulate my two old friends, Bill Cashin and Bob Pariseau and wish them the very best. Your Honor, I submitted a letter to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Based on what we've been seeing and the homeless population here in the City of Manchester last year during the months of January and February we had approximately 154 people homeless staying in New Horizons and we have beds for 82 people and we've been putting people on the dining room floor on mats and mattresses and I can tell

you that it creates a tremendous amount of problems for my staff and not only that it increases the costs of everything we do in terms of counseling people, in terms of providing food, shelter, blankets...everything. It creates an increased cost to New Horizons. Our statistics show that this year the homeless population is going

to be even higher and I've conferred with other agencies that assist the homeless population in the City and they too know and realize that their agencies are overburdened and are going to have tremendous numbers during the cold weather. So, I met with the Mayor's Office (David Scannell) and with Paul Martineau and numerous other people so that we could set up an emergency shelter on a temporary basis and we came up with French Hall up on Hackett Hill and Hackett Hill French Hall will be nothing than a temporary basis, temporary shelter, it's going to be overnight, we'll be transporting people there...people who are homeless who need shelter on a temporary basis and they will be brought back to the agency that is responsible for helping them the very next morning unless it's on weekends. I think that this is the best way to provide services to these people, it's important that we do this. I would hate to see that we would not provide shelter to people who are in need of it and I can tell you that our statistics show that...our numbers are high and I feel that we have to do something about it and in conference with Paul Martineau, who is right here, he feels the same way and if he wants to say something...

Mayor Baines stated before I ask Paul to say a few words, I think you received a copy of the headlines in *The New York Times* today and I was indicating that this is something that is experienced across the whole country...today, I visit the USMayors.org which is the parent organization for all of the Mayor's across the country...every city that they surveyed is indicating a very similar situation that we're facing here in Manchester, so it's not unique at all. Commissioner-Elect, if you would like to say a few words.

Commissioner-Elect Martineau stated basically the Mayor and his assistant are looking at various alternatives and this turns out to be the best one. It has the least impact on the neighborhood. If you know up there the City owns that property and 800 acres around there and the other thing is to give us an opportunity at the Welfare Department when people come in and their homeless we won't have to send them to hotels or motels...initially, we can send them there overnight and the next day process their applications and so forth. So, there is going to be economy realized from this.

Alderman Shea stated I think your last comment answered one of my questions, but could you answer the question...why is there a continuous increase in the number of homeless...I know of unemployment, but there's a little difference between unemployed people and homeless people and maybe, Louis...why are we

getting more people in Manchester, what is the cause, are these people that come...are they people coming from out-of-town because of the fact that other communities are discovering that Manchester can house and do certain things that they can't...what is the reason.

Mr. Craig replied that could be one reason, I think there's a vast number of reasons. The biggest reason the way I feel about it is since September 11th we have seen that the economy has gone south on us and in addition to that we have a tremendous amount of people we serve at New Horizons with low rate jobs that they are performing. Also, we have an awful lot of low-income people and there's not enough housing for them. The apartments and rooming houses are extremely expensive...you're talking well over \$1,000.00 a month for a two-bedroom apartment...even more than that in the inner-city which is a tremendous amount of money for people who are making \$7.00 an hour to pay and they simply can't afford it.

Alderman Shea asked are we getting people from out of Manchester coming into Manchester from other communities because of their inability to service the needs of the homeless or lack of wanting to and they're coming into Manchester, do you find that to be the case.

Mr. Craig replied we do see people coming to us from other communities and New Horizons...and I'm just speaking for New Horizons, I really don't know what other agencies do...we attempt to have those individuals reconnect with the agencies within the community they came from. I have said before that it's totally unfair to these people because their roots are in other communities and their families as well as their friends are in other communities, so we make every effort to try and reconnect them with the communities they're from. But, I also have to tell you that we have homeless people that are very transient, they're from shelter-to-shelter. We also have people from Manchester who are homeless that live in other shelters and other communities in the State of New Hampshire.

Alderman Shea stated the idea of the Welfare Department and your office getting together that will eliminate duplicate services, is that what your intent is to try to work together so people who would be apt to go on Welfare will be serviced by French Hall, is that why...

Mr. Craig replied I don't think that is our intent. I have no idea what the Welfare Department's going to do. It's just that my agency with numerous other agencies are concerned about people who are confronted with the cold just so that we can provide shelter to them on an emergency basis...that is all we are concerned about and then the next day they will be sent to City Welfare or whatever agency...

Alderman Shea stated that is what I am trying to get at. You'll be mixing some homeless people with people that ultimately might be going for Welfare services, is that what might happen, is that conceivable.

Commissioner-Elect Martineau stated I am sure there are people that are going to be coming to the Welfare Department that we already referred to New Horizons, but when Louis is filled up we need to have a place...we want to basically be able to provide them with shelter.

Alderman Shea stated so there are potential Welfare people that will be going to...not just the homeless, but people who are unemployed or are having a hard time with the economy who will need help in a sense initially to get over the hump that they're going to be experiencing...these are the kinds of people that will be going to French Hall or strictly homeless people that are now under the bridge or some other place.

Mr. Craig replied it will be people from New Horizons, from other agencies, families that are homeless and they are going to be housed on a temporary basis and then the very next day they are going to be transported back to the agency for assistance. Whether that agency is City Welfare or The Way Home or the Manchester Emergency Shelter, whatever agency that sent them to French Hall they will be brought back for assistance...some way assistance, hopefully will be given to them.

Alderman Shea stated I don't want to belabor it but my point is that there will be a mixture of people with different needs that will be housed if this approved over at French Hall.

Mr. Craig replied that is correct.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated first I'd like to congratulate City Clerk Leo Bernier and his Deputy Carol Johnson for the ten-page report that they put together over the course of the last three weeks. Of all of the bureaucratic reports we get and try to read this was one of the few that stands out as readable with good solid information and some recommendations that were appropriate, so I find they did an excellent job in the short time they had to put this together. I believe it's on page 5 of the report that they state that "the City in the short term may be better served by providing overnight shelter utilizing a large gymnasium or similar room or limited room with staff supervision." Is this an attempt to meet recommendations from that report.

Commissioner-Elect Martineau replied that is correct. As a matter of fact, in just the two days I've been there some of the recommendations that they have proposed are being implemented. The screening person that meets these people told me that there were either 19 calls or people coming in that she was able to refer immediately either through State Employment or Fuel Assistance. In the past, she said they would have to pass them onto a case worker. So, here you save the caseworker's time and you referred somebody and you've done the job. The people there should be commended that work there, believe me, they are good people and they've done a yeoman like job and I think that they deserve credit for the pressure and the stress they've been under for the performance that they have done.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated this report notes that people that are being housed on a long-term basis...30 days or more when in fact the goal should be to have them housed on a short-term basis. I assume that having them go up to the center every day, every evening and back every morning is an attempt to try to wean them off of the system of being long-term users of the system, is that true.

Commissioner-Elect Martineau stated that is correct. What I want to know when they come in is first where are you coming from and why are you here and then being able to place them there without initially having to do a motel or a hotel and go there overnight and then we can process the application and we can verify information to see if they truly qualify. It's a balancing act. You really want to take your less fortunate people in and on the same hand we want to make some economies.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated well, those were the softball questions now we'll get to the meat of your proposal. How many people do you anticipate serving on a daily basis by doing this, I don't believe it's in the report or the letter.

Mr. Craig replied that is kind of a mystical thing, we don't know, it could change every single day. But, getting back to your other question. Our purpose, at least the purpose of New Horizons and homeless agencies...nothing more to help people with shelter and the next day refer them to an agency. We've been talking about this...I'm totally unaware of that report, I haven't read that report...we've been talking about this for an awful long time.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked could you give me some idea of a minimum/maximum number, some ballpark figures.

Mr. Craig replied I could tell you right now that I could take about 25 people from New Horizons and put them over there.

Mayor Baines stated one of the things Louis has had to do over there...and they don't realize it...they've had to put them on the floors in the kitchen/cafeteria area.

Mr. Craig stated that is correct.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated if we take people from New Horizons we're not saving money by taking people that we're paying this exorbitant amount to go to hotels, we're trying to look at this...at least, I as an Alderman, as some kind of savings to the City. How do we realize that kind of saving.

Mayor Baines stated let's make it clear...there are two different missions at work here. Louis's job at New Horizons is to keep people out of the cold and Paul has another responsibility and they do a screening with this people that are going to the shelter, they're working in concert with each other...Carol, would you explain a little.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated I sat in on a meeting recently regarding French Hall, and my understanding from what we discussed at that meeting was that you could service both. And in reality New Horizons saves the City a lot of money because the people that they are serving the City is paying New Horizons a very small amount of money for the services that it is getting. But, I guess you have 19 families or 25 families at one point, but 19 families last I knew that were staying in hotels. Those are people that could be serviced at French Hall instead when they first hit for a short term period and then during the day they can be working on other things that they need to work on, whether it be state assistance or reconnecting with their community or just trying to find housing within the city or the jobs or whatever, but welfare can work with those people. New Horizons is going to have an overflow come winter and if they were servicing what they were last year, and you add say another 20% to that figure, which is probably what you are talking about in this economic condition and given the parameters of what Manchester is known for right now, they are not going to be able to service them. So, the City welfare would have to serve them, absorb those costs and put them somewhere. I guess what I am saying is that French Hall or something along that idea is a good alternative as far as your economics and having staffing, and being able to make sure that the agencies are following up. You have to service these people, you are not going to leave them out in the cold certainly. It's not the intent of, or anyone's intent I don't think.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated so we are talking about 90 days, \$26,000 divided by 90 is about \$289 a day to run the facility for those few months. What would be the maximum number, you mentioned 25, what would be the max that we could fit in their for our \$289 a day.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied that she would defer that question to Mr. Craig because he is the one that has viewed the facility and knows better how he is separating people out and he could probably answer that better than I can.

Mayor Baines stated that before they go any further, the heating has to be added to that, that's why Frank is up there so we are going to get to that in a minute.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated that was to be his next question.

Mr. Craig stated to respond to his question, once again, I have it's a mystery in terms of how many people, I can only give approximate from New Horizons but, there is enough room in there where you can provide space for families, and provide space for single men over the age of 18 which is the population we serve, and so you know in terms of numbers I can't tell you that alderman.

Alderman Vaillancourt questioned the rooms, is it one room.

Mr. Craig stated no, we were shown four.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked how many would fit in those four rooms, how are we going to get the beds.

Mr. Craig responded we are talking now from getting beds from the Red Cross.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked how many beds do you plan to put in those four rooms.

Mr. Craig stated I would like to put about 60 in there.

Mr. Frank Thomas, Public Works Director, addressed the Board stating as you mentioned Mayor in addition to the funds that are requested by Mr. Craig, there are other costs, utility costs, we also would have to bring the facility up to certain fire safety codes, fire extinguishers have been taken out of there, smoke detectors, we are going to have to test the sprinkler systems to make sure that's still working etc. In talking to Mr. Craig earlier this week he indicated four rooms. Based on that we did an inspection and we came up with a cost of about \$14,000 to again check the alarm system, add smoke detectors, etc. – and that includes heat. Four classrooms would be operated with electric heat and we built something in for that. Now that is for those four classrooms. We haven't really had a detailed discussion with Commissioner Martineau, if that facility is to be expanded to house more welfare recipients then that \$14,000 cost potentially could double, so again we have to define a little more of the scope of what exactly is going to be

done up there but there is a cost right now if we add the two together, probably somewhere between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated this was rather a more complicated proposal than it seemed at first merit then. So we are talking about \$25,000 plus the \$26,000.

Mr. Thomas replied that was correct.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated now we are sitting here on the 18th of December, can you get this ready in two weeks so it could be ready by January 1st as planned.

Mr. Thomas replied we can do the inspections, etc. yes, now if there happens to be something wrong with the alarm system or the sprinkler system obviously that's going to take longer and there would be additional costs connected.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated the wages of \$20,000 is for a three month period, how is that broken down.

Mr. Craig responded that was for \$10 per hour. That's a non-profit wage.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked what those people be doing, how many would there be there.

Mr. Craig responded it depends on the number of people, but they would be the overseers of French Hall.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated so you are talking about 2,000 man hours. So we divide that by 90 days, so you are talking about 22 man hours a day or person hours a day.

Mr. Craig stated we are talking 15 hours during the week.

Mr. Martineau stated they would go there at 5PM and in the morning at 8AM they would be out of there. So you have a 15 hour shift or two 7 ½ hour shifts, on the weekends obviously you would have to go 24 hours so from 5PM Friday to Monday morning 8AM.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked were they talking about one person manning this or two or three people or what.

Mr. Craig stated it was contingent upon the number of people that were going to be over there.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated but you put \$20,000 in there must be a certain number of man hours so you must of planned how many people you would need each day.

Mr. Craig stated that figure was based on one supervisor.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated it was.

Mr. Craig responded yes.

Alderman Hirschmann stated the core function of city government is really to provide for all citizens so I applaud the effort here. I do want to make sure that as we go down this path that this is the correct place to do this. I would ask at this time what were the other proposals. You met with the mayor's staff and there were other proposals.

Mr. Craig responded we looked at other buildings, however because of the fire department with the lack of sprinkler systems and use of the building we felt that French Hall was better suited for our needs.

Alderman Hirschmann stated on a 90 day basis, the city does own the building, we do have to try to provide for these people, would they be bathing at that building, are there showers there.

Mr. Craig responded they would not be taking showers there.

Alderman Hirschmann stated so there is no place to bathe.

Mr. Craig responded no.

Alderman Hirschmann asked if they were going to take there meals there.

Mr. Craig responded there may be light meals served, but we will not be doing any cooking there at all.

Alderman Hirschmann asked if they would serve a meal at the other facility and then transport them.

Mr. Craig stated if they were part of New Horizons we would serve them a meal.

Alderman Hirschmann stated so our meals are in addition to these costs that you are showing here.

Mr. Craig responded no, we did not provide meals in our request.

Alderman Hirschmann stated so wouldn't that be another cost item.

Mr. Craig responded not for New Horizons. Perhaps City Welfare he did not know. Whether they have food vouchers to hand out at the present time I have no idea.

Alderman Hirschmann stated so no bathing, the meals are going to be paid for somebody else. Transportation, how is that being handled.

Mr. Craig stated we talked about that and some of that we have to talk more extensively. New Horizons has a van we will be providing transportation to the people that we serve. Other agencies and I can't speak for all of them, but they will be providing transportation, and I'm not so sure about the Manchester Police Department but I would hope that in the case of an emergency they would provide transportation as well.

Alderman Hirschmann stated numerous agencies would have to get involved because a van only holds about 8 people, you are talking about 60 people per day possibly using this shelter. Alderman Hirschmann directed a question to Mr. Thomas commenting that last year to heat that building could you tell us the rate, wasn't it around \$30,000.

Mr. Thomas responded he did not remember off hand, it was expensive, it wasn't included in the Building Maintenance budget. I did make a request for contingency but I was able by the end of the year to accommodate it in our existing budget. The reason why it is fairly expensive is there is really two heating systems, there is central gas heating system which is not feasible to run, you are only going to be maintaining it for winter conditions or if you are only going to utilize a small section of the building. As I mentioned each one of the classrooms have its only separate electric heat system and as you know that is fairly expensive. Budgeting for the four rooms that I initially assumed they were going to have we had budgeted \$9,000 for the electricity, lights and heat.

Alderman Hirschmann asked if he was budgeting for salting and sanding noting the building was not maintained last year.

Mr. Thomas responded we as a low priority would make a pass through the parking lot, but if it is going to be utilized we'll make an effort to somewhat keep it clean we would not obviously clean the whole parking area, but we'd make it passable and speaking with Mr. Craig he indicated that some of the people using the facility would shovel the walks and do that type of snow removal operations.

Alderman Hirschmann stated this is one idea of a few. What are the ideas on the table, what was discussed. Mr. Martineau you were in those meetings, what were the other ideas.

Mr. Martineau stated basically I was just brought in and like I say the mayor and his assistant and Louis had been looking at other facilities and apparently they didn't meet the criteria either through safety or whatnot. This building we went and took a look at it and it seemed feasible and the City owns it, it doesn't have an impact on the other neighborhood. As far as the food, if these people came to the welfare department we don't have that, we send them to a motel, you give them food vouchers, you know, it's expensive and this way like I say at least we can send them there, we can process the application, we can find out if we can facilitate them and send them to other agencies or whatnot and take the burden off of us. And you have to do something, something has to be done.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I agree. All I was getting at is I was under the assumption that this was your plan, this isn't your plan.

Mayor Baines stated no, this is the result of a number of meetings, and one of the buildings was the St. Cecelia's Hall.

Alderman Hirschmann stated that is what I am asking and no one has the answer.

Mayor Baines stated it doesn't meet the codes because the sprinkler system. They went through an analysis of different places and we had zoning issues that effected certain buildings, and then you have location and that is why they eventually settled on Hackett Hill. Mayor Baines asked Louis if that was correct.

Mr. Craig responded yes, that was correct, we also looked at the Blessed Sacrament Hall, the Bishop O'Neil center. They have basketball games down there and you have to get them out at 6AM and get them in there after the basketball games, all kinds of complications were presented to us and so we said that wasn't going to work out.

Alderman Hirschmann stated my concern is only this, the effort that we put forward that it works, that we send people to a place where they can take a shower and function. If you are going to have people going there on a Friday, and they are going to live there Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and there is no facility for showers or cleanliness I would think that Fred Rusczeck would have a concern with this plan, he is our health officer. Like I said I want to take care of the citizenry at every level, and I think that this is a..

Mr. Craig interjected stating I can tell you that these individuals sent there from New Horizons we would take them back on a Saturday or a Sunday so we would provide showers for them, but I also can tell you that I know homeless people who have not taken a shower in a couple of weeks, because they don't have access to showers because they are homeless.

Alderman Hirschmann stated they deserve to have that available to them, that is my point. And my last point is this corridor of the city, I live in this ward, I serve this ward, this is a very remote and desolate part of our city. It's an undeveloped area of the city, there is no infrastructure, there are no sidewalks, there are no corner stores, so if someone does leave that building and walks down a road, they could be walking for miles and get run over by a car or whatnot, I'm not saying that they are being put in the wrong spot, but they really need that transportation because if anyone's on foot they are in danger.

Mr. Craig stated people would be transported.

Alderman Wihby stated 8:00 O'clock they are coming back, where are they going. Where are they spending their whole day.

Mr. Craig responded they would be going to the agencies that sent them there. First of all the Welfare Department, New Horizons, the Salvation Army deals a great deal with homeless families, the Way Home deals with homeless families, the Manchester Emergency Housing which is underneath the City Welfare they deal with numerous homeless families.

Alderman Wihby stated so they would go to these places and they would just come back again the next night.

Mr. Craig responded I don't know, it's possible that they could, and I can tell you that people that we deal with at New Horizons will be going back the next night because of our numbers.

Alderman Wihby stated so they will come and spend the day at your facility.

Mr. Craig stated if we can find them another shelter to go to, or if we can find them a room or send them to the facility or community that they are from.

Alderman Wihby stated what is the option, otherwise we are just throwing them out on the streets because we are too full.

Mr. Martineau stated when they come back to the Welfare office what we are going to have to do is to process them, it's either we are going to have to place

them somewhere that be the case or one of the other things here is tomorrow I am going to be going and taking a look at Bethel Court, it's a three family home there I am going to be going with Jeff Michelson who is the director of the Manchester Emergency Housing. And we are going to look at the configuration there and see, obviously we have three families we can get in there maybe we can get more, I'm not sure but that would be one avenue and we could give them some food vouchers and do whatever has to be done to maintain them.

Alderman Wihby stated so if we don't do it there is going to be a bigger cost.

Mr. Martineau stated of course.

Mayor Baines stated something the Commissioner just said, what we are trying to do is get a lot of the agencies from the Continuum of Care together, I know you are going to a meeting tomorrow, because what we are sensing is a real understanding that all these agencies need to work together. And they are willing to help us with their resources, with their people, make sure that we confront this issue as a community to make sure that people are taken care of, and I think that's a very important thing that is happening.

Alderman Gatsas stated certainly Commissioner-Elect I am going to ask you this question and I don't know if either Carol or Leo can answer it but going back to where Alderman Shea was going. I've heard some alarming statistics that say that there are a lot of influx with families coming to Manchester from other communities, and I guess my question is, is that influx coming here from Nashua, and where we don't see these influxes other times because the Welfare Department may be in a different service range than what Nashua is. I certainly don't have a problem, it's imperative that we provide housing for homeless people that are Manchester people. Now, if its just the case that other welfare departments are sending people from Nashua or other communities because of the ability of them collecting in Manchester much easier, then I have a problem with that. Let me just continue because about three months ago we had traveled to Berlin as Senators to see their problems up there. We went to a high school, and the principal of that high school happened to be a graduate of Manchester Central, John Moulis, and he said that the biggest problem he has seen in Berlin is that because the housing costs are so low, that welfare people, 19 of his 21 students that had enrolled in Berlin High were from welfare families, and it seems as though they are just moving them north because the housing is less expensive. Now I understand that Carol is going to answer the question, but I think that if that's the case and we're as a City looking into holding police and fire in their budget process, eliminating some positions, and we are looking at a million and a half deficit then maybe we need to send some of these people back to the

communities that they come from so that they absorb some of the tax dollars that Manchester is absorbing.

Ms. Johnson stated I don't know that I can fully answer your question, but I can try and address some of what you are raising I think. The incoming Welfare Commissioner and the staff over there are already taking some of the recommendations as I understanding it or intending to endorse some of those recommendations and start out with them in January. I think that one of the first things that they are going to do is look more closely at where people are coming from. I know that you have had an influx from the Derry area, you've had an influx from the Concord area, certainly Berlin has had an impact. I mean Manchester is known as the place possibly to find employment and Berlin is not so obviously you are going to get some of the people who want to work to come to this area. I think there has been a philosophy of just assisting people and not really looking at do they really want to be here, and I think that those are the questions that are going to start being raised. And I think you will start seeing more case management done both on a Welfare Department level but also with the inter-agency actions appear to be surfacing at this time. Certainly New Horizons is already doing that because they do, do casework there. They are trying to work with people to get them back to the communities that they really want to be in. And you are right housing is cheaper up north and I think that you have some communities that will probably move a lot of people up north because it is cheaper. But Manchester certainly has it's share of a lot of services and that's one of the issues that you have as a big city and you have to look at those cases individually, and I think they are going to do more of that. I don't think that has been occurring up until now.

Mr. Craig stated I have found, and I know other agencies have found, that and I'm sure even the Welfare Department, you know people are homeless, they don't want to be homeless. And that we have seen that other communities have sent them to us, and it's really not the homeless peoples' fault, it's not the homeless families' fault, and we try to get them reconnected with the community. And in talking with Paul I know he is going to do that, because that is one of the things that he has been emphasizing already. But I've got to tell you we have got to take care of the homeless people, and if we don't we are going to have all kinds of problems. We can take of them the next day, we can send them to Concord, Londonderry, Derry or try to get them into another community, but on an emergency basis we have to take care these families and we have to take care of homeless people.

Alderman Gatsas stated Louis maybe you can help me. Obviously your sister communities of Concord and Nashua, I'm sure there must be New Horizons or similar agencies in those locations. It sounds as though you influx of homeless

people that you are gearing to are almost double what you can accommodate. From 82 to somewhere around 175.

Mr. Craig responded that was correct.

Alderman Gatsas asked can you tell me if that same influx is happening on a double proportion in those communities or are we picking up the burden.

Mr. Craig stated I can't tell you if it's double. We've always had more than we could handle insofar as the number of beds, but I know that the homeless problem is not just in Manchester, but in Concord and Nashua and numerous other communities throughout New Hampshire.

Alderman Gatsas addressed a question to Mr. Thomas, stating Bethel Court, I think we appropriated some funds and that should be just about completed.

Mr. Thomas stated yes, the final sheetrocking is going to be complete the 27th of this month.

Alderman Gatsas stated I guess I have a problem to think that for one second we are going to attempt to take homeless people to French Hall without any facilities there for really housing. Because if nothing else if you are going to attempt to take somebody to a different level we should really attempt to make that a different level and not just here's a place. To offer somebody a situation that they can't walk at least one block and see at least daylight, or some opportunity. Bethel Court is there. I understand we are going to look at it for the home, but maybe it's a situation that the homeless that that gives them an opportunity to at least have other agencies say here this is how you get to Bethel Court and you can walk there and you don't have to worry about transportation throughout the entire city.

Mayor Baines stated he wished to respond to that. They had been working on Bethel Court and had some conversations today about that, I don't believe that Bethel Court is suitable for what we are talking about here. We are looking at it, we have also been talking to some other agencies that work in this arena of providing emergency shelter, and that could probably be used more for families, but again we are going to be taking a look at that tomorrow. They are going to be taking a look at that tomorrow but I don't think that will solve the issue that we are talking about here.

Alderman Gatsas stated I'm looking at it and asking how doesn't it solve the problem when the opportunity is there for a shower and its an opportunity, I think they are three bedroom units, and it's an opportunity if someone wants to cook

some soup, they have that opportunity, to take them and put them in French Hall I don't think is an opportunity.

Mayor Baines stated its sort of like, again, I don't want to debate it, but we are looking at what Louis is providing right now is an emergency shelter, we are also looking at families that are in hotels, as you know we were close to ringing up \$1 million bill to the Queen City Motel that we could have purchased about a year ago for about that price. We are looking at lots of different issues here. We are looking at emergency shelters that we don't know what the numbers are going to be. We are looking at families, and that appears to be a situation over there where we could perhaps house three families on an emergency basis. So I think we are really talking about two different things here.

Mr. Martineau stated you don't want to mix a bunch of people in there also. In French Hall we are going to segregate, males that are going to be segregated in one part, and families in another part, and the males in the part that they are in have their own bathroom facility, no shower facility, and the families will have access to female bathrooms and male bathrooms. If you start mixing a bunch of people in it can be not a good situation, let's put it that way.

Alderman Gatsas stated I have seen this country since September 11th make incredible strides to help people. Now I think maybe its time that we look and talk to the business community of this city because there has to be a facility that is better accommodations for homeless people and families that is closer for them to get to than worrying about how you are going to get to French Hall on a regular basis. I just don't think that that's the most appropriate place to put the homeless or families that are in transition. It doesn't make sense. I think its time maybe the business community at this point take a look and take a step forward to see what we can make available in a short 90 day period. I don't think anybody is asking anybody to do this for two years, five years or any length of time. But I think maybe we need to ask the business community to come forward. Cause certainly September 11th has shown you that people will do incredible things when they are asked.

Alderman Levasseur stated I like to take the long term view on this and I want to thank Louis Craig who I've known and done business with downtown. Your reputation is so good they are actually coming from all over the country, because you do such a good job over there at the center. I agree with my counterparts that I don't think French Hall is the right location. If we are going to spend \$26,000 or so upgrading the French Hall, I think we should make the investment over the long term to take care of where the Pal Center is. If it's going to cost us money to upgrade it now, why don't we take the long term view that this is not going to go away this winter. That the economy may slow down for a couple more years and

that we are going to need something that is not going to be temporary. If French Hall is sold in the next six months to a year we are never going to have that facility. But the Pal facility which is close to downtown, close to transportation, close to your place, the Horizon Center, is where the Pal center is located so it may cost a little more than the \$20 to \$25,000 we are talking about upgrading at French Hall that we are talking about upgrading, but we will have it there for the long term and we can use it in cases of emergency. So I think we should do the right thing. I think we should walk out of here tonight feeling like we accomplished something and we made that determination, and your honor, there is money available I think if we wanted to take some money, we do have money in that senior center account that's been sitting there for two years, we have 1.3 million that has been put aside for the senior center. I don't think borrowing a little bit of that money to put in for a long term view of this shelter problem and you should be coming back with some bondable money in the next year I think we need to do something now and do it right.

Mr. Craig stated I wish there was a place and I wish that someone would come forth and say here is a beautiful building for you take care of all the homeless in the city of Manchester. And I got to tell you that when you start talking about buildings you start talking about sprinkler systems, variances, and your talking about the fire department expressing their concerns about the building, you're talking about the Building Department coming in and talking about egress and exits and doorways and everything, and can you have that done by January 1st, I don't think so. You talk about the long term that is wonderful, that's great. I'd like to see a long term accommodation for the homeless I really would, but you know what the temperature is out there. January 1st it's going to be really cold, and that's when we are starting January 1st.

Alderman Levasseur stated so you've already looked at this location and determined that it could not be put together very quickly.

Mr. Craig responded we could not. Absolutely not. Not with what we've gone through over this issue. We simply would not be able to put this in place in time. We've got to do something about the homeless at this time, we can't wait.

Mayor Baines stated for two months we've been working on this issue. This is the best solution for right now. We all agree that we have to take a long term view of the housing issues in this community.

Alderman Levasseur asked what the zoning allowed for at French Hall, and commented that he just would like the access to be better than French Hall, have it closer to downtown, and he thought St. Cecile's would be the place to do it right.

Mayor Baines replied not right now.

Leon LaFrenniere, Building Commissioner, addressed the Board stating that this was the city's RP zone, research park zone, which doesn't allow any housing uses per say. One of the issues that we talked about with a facility of this nature is whether there would be city participation and whether there would be city administration. Certainly the City is not subject to its own zoning regulations if it is administering a city program in a city building. So that issue would have to be resolved in terms of both the ownership interests and how it is structured as well as who is administering the program.

Alderman Levasseur stated he wished to make one other point. There was a story in the paper that Concord has been giving their homeless a hard time. And I've also spoken to certain individuals that's said it's the practice of State cops to take homeless people from up north and bring them and leave them at Manchester's doorstep. So it is because they are sending them here because again we seem to be able to provide better services then or are able or more willing to do these services than the other towns around us and it is burdensome and I understand you do have frustration because there are so many people that are available. I really think we need to find a place right here in the inner city.

Mayor Baines stated again, it has been a two month process. If anybody has any ideas.

Alderman Levasseur stated it would have been nice to know that the process was started your honor, then we would have been involved in it.

Mayor Baines stated the people that have been experts in this field have been out there doing it.

Alderman Levasseur stated two months ago we could have been working on St. Ceciles and it would have been done by now.

Mr. Martineau stated that he would like to form a committee to look at a long term solution and I would like Alderman Levasseur and Alderman Gatsas to work together and see if we can get some businesses and have a long term solution next year.

Alderman Thibault stated my question has been hammered to death in several different ways here with some of the other aldermen's questions but there are a couple I have. He asked Louis, you did say you did provide a transportation service to your people if you will, but I think that would put a burden on you Paul

because you do not have a vehicle over at Welfare that would provide transportation.

Mr. Martineau responded presently we don't, but I talked to Frank Thomas about getting a vehicle I know in the past when I first came on in 1972 as an assessor Mr. Breton had a vehicle, Leo Bernier had a vehicle, and apparently there was a vehicle there and for some reason it disappeared.

Alderman Thibault stated that was something they would have to look at if they were going to get into a situation such as French Hall because it is 6 miles out of town.

Alderman Lopez stated I think everybody is saying the same thing. I don't know how many aldermen or people in the audience have ever been homeless or hungry, but people are going to need help and I totally agree with Chief Craig and Paul Martineau. This is a problem that has to be taken care of now, and it's not the best solution and I think they realize that. But I think its going to give an opportunity one for the welfare commissioner to get his hands on this stuff, work out something along with, Louis, and then work out this long range program. Now it's been stated that we need an additional \$25,000. That's going to be \$51,000. Do we have that money to do this now.

Mayor Baines stated we had a suggestion about this, and requested Mr. Clougherty to address the Board.

Mr. Clougherty responded if you will recall at the last meeting we took action to make a million dollars available to deal with the welfare related issues of which this of course is related. So I would expect that this would be the source of dollars and it would be managed through the welfare department's budget. That would be our recommended approach.

Alderman Lopez stated not to cut anybody off, I think we all know what the situation is, it's an emergency type situation, whatever ordinance or zoning which Leon said we can do it belongs to us, I think we ought to go forward with this project, at the same time establish that committee and look at long range. It can be looked back in July and maybe there is a business man out there that is willing to give us, but you are not going to get it tomorrow or next week when it is freezing weather.

Alderman Lopez stated I think we should let them do their job, let them take care of the homeless, let us provide the necessary funds and move forward on this project and so moved.

Alderman Pariseau seconded the motion.

Alderman Cashin stated my only question is what happens at the end of March to the 60 people, what do we do with them then.

Mr. Craig stated hopefully we will have warm weather, and this shelter is to provide shelter for people during extreme cold weather. That's all it is. What's going to happen is they are going to go back to living in their vehicles. They are going to go back to living in the river or in the fields, where ever they go. But in this manner we will be taking them out of the cold and giving them shelter.

Alderman Cashin stated on a short term basis I guess I can buy that but this is not a long term solution by any stretch of the imagination.

Mr. Craig agreed stating absolutely not.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated she wished to make a comment in terms of what Alderman Cashin is stating. I think that over this 90 day period as Mr. Martineau is administering his department you will find some of the caseload going down and perhaps opening up other avenues. That also gives them an opportunity to look closer at places like Bethel Court or other facilities within the community, or perhaps to work with some of the agencies around to expand some of the case management and other issues that are part and parcel of this, it's not just that somebody lives in a car because they want to necessarily or that there is another alternative for them, it's just that somebody needs to walk with them through the system sometimes. And in some instances you are going to be working at returning them to the community that they really want to be in, or where they can get a fresh start. In some instances they are never going to find housing in Manchester because they've burnt every bridge in the city and they are just not going to find someplace. So those issues need to be addressed and you need some time right now to get them out of the cold, and have something over their heads, a warm place to stay and have the agencies work together at a better solution for the long range and actually get a handle on what it is Manchester has and really needs to be servicing, because I don't think anybody has a handle on that right now. But certainly if you are spending \$14,000 a week, although it's down to about \$7,000 now as I understand it in hotels, you certainly going to recoup your money very quickly and perhaps be able to get a better handle on what the real answers are. I think New Horizons has been overburdened for a number of years. It was overburdened in the early 80's when I was there, that hasn't changed. They had 120 people there back in 1987, when the housing crisis was around then. And some things just go in cycles and your in a bad time of the cycle right now and some of that will ease up, but some of it is not going to go away in Manchester

and it maybe needs to expand to some extent but you need to get a handle on what it is you need to expand.

Alderman Hirschmann stated with regard to Alderman Lopez used the term emergency act, and that's the way I view this. If this was an urgency in another tense moment of a hurricane or a flood, I would thin some building like the National Guard Armory would house some people in cots, why can't we have FEMA or the government work collaberatively with us to put people in the National Guard Armory.

Mr. Scannel responded that was one of the first suggestions that people had made and indeed the National Guard was called into an initial meeting. It was made clear that that would require some type of declaration from the governor indicating that this was an emergency. That was regarded as another bureaucratic loop that would have to be jumped through before we could meet the immediate needs.

Alderman Hirschmann stated if that is the case that we need to declare an emergency act in the city of Manchester then inform our governor of the situation I would think that this body would want to do that and we would want to do that tonight. And I would make that motion your honor, that we would send a message to Governor Shaheen that maybe we need to sue the National Guard Armory to house these people.

Mayor Baines noted they had a motion on the floor already and they needed to deal with that motion and then come back.

Alderman Shea stated I want to thank you for donating your time because you are not really a commissioner in office you are a commissioner that is donating their time and that's very much appreciated and it shows how willing you are and how much you carried through on when you were campaigning that you did have the interest of the people at heart. A couple of things, if we were to fund this I guess what we are doing is combining the welfare office with the New Horizon situation. I guess what we are doing is interlocking the two now, so there will be obviously services provided to your agency, which is a private agency, is that correct Louis.

Mr. Craig responded we are a non-profit agency, but it's not just New Horizons it's other agencies as well.

Alderman Shea stated but the money that we are donating or taking out of contingency for the needs of the Welfare Department are actually supporting your particular agency or non-profit agency because you are going to be utilizing French Hall and we are to pay for that is that correct.

Mr. Craig responded that is correct.

Alderman Shea state the second point is I think that we've tossed around and again maybe it's been defined the word homelessness there is the perception that a homeless person is much different than a person who has a family that is making minimum wages that can't support their family and has to go on welfare. So that there is that distinction that we have to clear up because I guess the perception in society at times is that a welfare person is striving to improve themselves to go, they've had bad luck, they can't really meet their needs at the time but they are willing to work together with agencies in order to improve their lot to get back on to their area to where they won't need it. But the homeless seem to be a different type of person, these people seemingly are suffering from social problems, mental problems sometimes. In other words in years past many of these people were in state institutions and over the course of time the state has decided that these types of people cannot be at the expense of the state so they have been placed back into the communities where they can find themselves and that's I think where the distinction is in terms of peoples minds. Am I correct in stating that.

Mr. Craig stated that part of that was correct but I've got to tell you that I know an awful lot of homeless families that are wonderful people, and I don't think you can make a distinction between people like them and people on welfare. We do serve people who suffer from alcoholism and the diseases of drug addiction and with mental illness as well. But these are people who need help.

Alderman Shea stated nobody is decrying that. I worked in the state hospital for three years so I know that but what I am trying to say is that the burden has been placed by the state onto the cities, and this is a problem that somehow or other the state has not come through and said well we are going to help the communities, they have said hey we're through with the problem now put it on the communities. Hillsborough County and Merrimack County has had problems with this so that it's a problem that we as a community have to examine. Your office has to examine it Paul as Carol said and the agencies in the city have to get together and say if we need state help or federal help we have to go after these people that are elected and say you have to start helping us because we are going down the tube and it is not really our problem as such, its problems that should be handled together will all of these agencies. But I think that is really for the future but it has to be done. A big responsibility I'm sure.

Alderman Gatsas stated this is probably a question for the city solicitor. What liability does the city incur should their be an intertwining between New Horizons and the Welfare Department, and should some catastrophic event happen to some family that has been sent over by Welfare by a homeless person.

Solicitor Clark responded generally the property right now has an insurance policy covering it. The policy would have to be upgraded to cover inhabitants. If an event occurs on the property we would expect that the insurance would cover it.

Mr. Ntapolis, Risk Manager, stated we self insure again as the City of Manchester goes we'd be looking, I had a conversation with Chief Craig, the same broker that deals with the insurance aspect for New Horizons, also is one of the City of Manchester's broker's so they know what we look for. One of the things we look for is a certificate of insurance and in that certificate they would name the City as an additional insured, so we'd be able to have insurance coverage there. Plus for the liability we just self insure that amount .

Alderman Gatsas asked Mr. Craig, in your experience would you say that the homeless and the families that are on welfare are a good mix

Mr. Craig asked do I think that the families that are homeless and families that are on welfare are a good mix.

Alderman Gatsas stated no, I am not necessarily saying that both families , I am saying the homeless because the majority of what you are saying to me, the four rooms there will be a separate of males that are homeless, females that are homeless, families that are homeless and also you will find the welfare department sending families in transition that are without shelter there. Do you see that as an appropriate mix.

Mr. Craig responded well I see it as an appropriate mix only because there is four large rooms and the rooms are quite separated and there is going to be supervision there.

Alderman Gatsas stated the supervision that you are saying that the rooms that are large could accommodate a family of four.

Mr. Craig responded very easily.

Alderman Gatsas stated how many families of four could you accommodate in that one room.

Mr. Craig stated I can't give you a correct answer on that alderman.

Alderman Gatsas state you are saying 60 people total. Does that include people from the welfare department or is that totally a separate entity.

Mr. Craig stated I would think that it would be referrals from the Welfare Department.

Alderman Gatsas stated so let's assume you have one room that is single males, one room that is single females. That leaves you two rooms.

Mr. Craig stated we would not send single females there. No, would not.

Alderman Gatsas asked if they would take two families and put them in the same room.

Mr. Craig stated yes, but without the meal.

Alderman Gatsas stated what I am trying to get to is that obviously I am looking at a situation that doesn't Bethel Court best serve your homeless situation because I don't see with the cost of what's there that there are going to be a lot of welfare families being sent there because the accommodations aren't such that you can really accommodate more than two or three families. Now either they are going to be from the Welfare Department or the homeless or New Horizons but at most in four rooms you may be able to accommodate three to four families. Two in each one.

Mr. Craig stated he thought it would be more than that many families. Alderman to be honest with you I haven't the foggiest notion about Bethel Court. I don't know about that.

Alderman Gatsas I think that Bethel Court is something from your point of view but I don't see the situation that the Welfare Department this is a double mix, I think if you look at Bethel Court for the homeless situation right now, I believe there are nine bedrooms in their at least along with living rooms, along with – I think Alderman Levasseur has a better idea on how many rooms in each apartment are in there, but certainly when you think about the configuration of Welfare spending \$7,000 a week in hotels that the conduciveness of taking families and putting them into a mixed room I really have a problem with that I don't think that that is an atmosphere in a dormitory in classroom that is the least accommodating way.

Mayor Baines and Mr. Craig agreed.

Mr. Craig stated he agreed with him but had to tell him.

Alderman Gatsas stated off the top of my head I can think of three or four locations that I think if I made phone calls to tomorrow, that those accommodations would be better than French Hall.

Mr. Craig asked are they willing to give us the building. Are they willing to.

Alderman Gatsas stated I don't think they are willing to give it to you for a long term, but obviously for the situation that you are in I think that they would be more than accommodating to help you out in a three month period versus taking those people and sending them to French Hall it doesn't make sense.

Mr. Martineau stated what I see here I am not seeing a whole bunch of families going over there, what I am seeing is single individuals, and there is one large rooms where they can be in on cots and pillows and blankets and so forth, and there are some classrooms where you could fit two or three families in there if you had to. So I don't see it as automatically sending families over there. If people come into the welfare office and they have kids and so forth and we have time to process the application we may have to put them in a hotel or motel. But if they come in at the last minute we are going to have an opportunity to put them someplace overnight and get them out of the cold.

Alderman Gatsas stated I would take a family, before you stuck them in a classroom, with three small children, that there would be some accommodation that either would have to be a hotel room, because I don't think any family wants to have three kids running around in a classroom on a weekend.

Mayor Baines stated he thought they needed to keep this in perspective, noting we are only talking about emergency situation, only emergency situations are we talking about here and in all do respect, I've spent a lot of time at New Horizons and if any of you want to go over there that haven't been there, these are not ideal conditions either, these are emergency situations. That's all we are talking about here. We are talking about Bethel Court but Bethel Court is not the solution to this issue right now. We need a facility like French Hall. Time is running out. We have to solve this issue tonight to let us move forward on French Hall, we are going to continue to explore alternatives, but we have to get moving on this issue. If anybody wants to participate in discussions and come visit Bethel Court with us tomorrow, and visit other alternatives, let's continue to do so, but there are a lot of fire code issues and other issues related to housing. This is emergency only. It is an appropriate response to an emergency situation.

Alderman Lopez requested to move the motion. Alderman O'Neil seconded the motion to move the question. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. Aldermen Vaillancourt, Hirschmann, Gatsas voted nay. Aldermen Pariseau, Cashin, Thibault, Wihby, Levasseur, Sysyn, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez and Shea voted yea. The motion carried.

Mayor Baines requested the Clerk to read the main question.

Deputy Clerk Johnson advised she understood the motion to be made by Alderman Lopez, seconded by Alderman Pariseau, to approve the request for \$26,000 to cover emergency overnight shelter program and for additional funding requested by Mr. Thomas.

Alderman O'Neil asked if the Board wanted to amend it to read the correct amount.

Mayor Baines requested clarification from Mr. Thomas who concurred up to an additional \$30,000 was the appropriate amount.

Aldermen Lopez and Pariseau so concurred the intention of their motion to include the \$26,000 and up to an additional \$30,000 as requested by Highway, for a total of up to \$56,000 for emergency shelter needs.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked if now that the language had been changed, did that reopen discussion.

Mayor Baines responded no it did not.

In response to questions raised by Alderman Levasseur, it was noted for the record that the funds were all coming out of the \$1 million set aside as contingency for Welfare issues.

Mayor Baines called for a vote on the main motion of authorizing expenditures up to \$56,000 for emergency shelter needs. The motion carried with none recorded in opposition.

4. Resolutions:

“Amending the 2002 & 2001 Community Improvement Program, transferring, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000) for the 2001 CIP 511601 Parks Capital Improvement Project.”

“Amending the 2002 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Sixteen Thousand Dollars (\$16,000.00) for FY2002 CIP 410402 - MHRA Community Policing Program.”

“Amending the FY2002 Community Improvement Program, transferring, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) for FY2002 CIP 811102 Wetland Inventory Evaluation Project.”

“Amending the FY2002 Community Improvement Program, transferring, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) for FY2002 CIP 713802 Webster/Beech Traffic Improvement Project.”

“Amending the 2002 Community Improvement Program, transferring, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for the 2002 CIP 713902 Kelley Falls Infrastructure Improvements Project.”

On motion of Alderman O’Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to suspend the rules and dispense with reading of the resolutions by titles only.

Alderman Wihby moved that the Resolutions ought to pass and be Enrolled. Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

5. CIP Budget Authorizations:

2000	650300	Hackett Hill Development – Revision #2
2001	511601	Parks Capital Improvement Project – Revision #1
2001	711001	Public Works Infrastructure Improvements Program – Revision #1
2001	750001	Infrastructure ADA Access Improvements
2002	210402	Homeless Health Care
2002	410402	MHRA Community Policing – Revision #2
2002	710602	Elmwood Gardens, Streets, Sidewalks – Revision #1
2002	713802	Webster/Beech Traffic Improvement Project
2002	713902	Kelley Falls Infrastructure Improvements
2002	811102	Wetland Inventory Evaluation – Revision #1

Alderman Pariseau moved that the CIP budget authorizations be approved, subject to final adoption of related resolutions. Alderman O'Neil duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Wihby, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee